

SCANSION

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science fiction weekly newsletter --

Some basic discussion of the objects of science fiction fandom seems to have gotten under way in the last couple of issues of this paper, albeit in a rather slap-happy mood. John Earls will inevitably find considerable support for his views on the futility of most fan organization, though he has obviously greatly overstated his case in his deliberately provocative treatment. Without a certain amount of organization, John would not have made a number of the contacts he unmistakably enjoys keeping up. As he says, however, people are drifting out of fan activities in large numbers. The continuous demands made on their pockets for the upkeep of a largely unnecessary organization have been mainly responsible for this.

Over the last few weeks, we have heard voiced the opinion that the club is falling apart, or at least regressing, through lack of organization, and last week Sydney fandom's superannuated "enfant terrible", Arthur Haddon, devoted his issue of SCANSION to the statement of this view. My opinion of "organizers" amongst science fiction fans has always been that they are people who map out schemes of things to be done, always by others, while the organizers direct. Actually, everything positive accomplished by fans has been the result of individual effort, usually quite spontaneous. Noone organized Don Tuck into compiling his handbook, and the AFPA boys are known for the results they've achieved, not for internal discipline or a brilliantly conceived constitution. The minimum of organization is the most effective organization, and the less time and money spent on maintaining the organization, the more there is available to put towards the objects of the organization.

Talking of people who have drifted away from the fan clubs, or in this case, those who have run away screaming, I am reminded of our worthy friends Nick Solntseff and Lyell Crane, both of whom are going through a period of vigorous reaction against science fiction fandom, after having been very active in the field in past years. I understand that while both are conscientiously avoiding fans, each considers the other to be still in this category, so that he must exert great care not to encounter the other around the area where they live -- not more than two or three hundred yards apart.

John's SCANSION also provokes a few thoughts about today's magazine science fiction, which must be conceded to be in a pretty sad state. The reader is little deceived by the talk of mature sociological science fiction, and the progress that has been made since the "gadget era". If the gadget writers had been as innocent of understanding in their fields of engineering and physics as our "sociological" writers are in the social sciences, the phenomenal growth of science fiction's popularity would not have taken place. It has often been said that the stories we read in our more impressionable years hold an unjustified place in our regard. Have any of you "human interest" enthusiasts, who were so carried away by "THE DEMOLISHED MAN" re-read it lately?

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